



DVI Director
Cynthia Lovell

Customer Appreciation Day

The Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired, through its rehabilitative facility: Delaware Industries for the Blind hosted a Customer Appreciation Day on Friday October 20, 2006. This annual event was held at the DIB site at the Biggs Building on the Health and Social Services Herman M. Holloway Campus, in New Castle.

DVI/DIB celebrated nearly 100 years of successful partnerships with business and government agencies. The agency provides employment to over 50 Delawareans who are blind or visually impaired. Programs operated include Customer Service and Sales, Switchboard Operators, Marketing, Data Entry, Screen Printing, Engraving, Embroidery, Production, Assembly and Janitorial services.

The purpose of this event was to thank the numerous DIB customers and to highlight new programs such as the Custom Framing Shop and Gift Basket Department. To that end, tours of the Promotional Department Showroom, Custom Framing and Specialty Items and the Engraving and Embroidery areas were conducted.

In addition to the tours, there were remarks by DIB General Manager Alan Wingrove, and DVI Director Cindy Lovell. Following the remarks attendees enjoyed lunch and entertainment.



Director's Note

Welcome to the first edition of the "new look" DVI newsletter. We hope you enjoy the updated format and style. Our goal is to make this publication more user friendly to all: blind, low vision and sighted customers. The Newsletter will be published two to three times a year, in sighted, low vision and Braille versions and will be complemented by a companion publication called *DVI ALERTS*, which will be a one page sheet announcing time sensitive information. We are planning to keep as regular features items such as: Events, Advocates Corner, Focus on a Consumer, and Focus on a Disease. I invite all readers to offer feedback on your opinion of our newsletter by sending me an e-mail, note or calling me at **302-255-9800**. Also, remember to look for DVI on the internet:

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dvi/index.html>

Sincerely,

Cynthia Lovell, *Director*



Jean May

May Achieves Delaware First — National Certification

Jean May works fulltime assisting blind and visually impaired persons to gain or maintain their independence by providing adaptive living skills training, low vision services, sensitivity training and advocacy. She is the first rehabilitation instructor employed by the DHSS Division for the Visually Impaired to achieve national accreditation in her field. Over the last two years, she has completed the required studies and training, including a 350 hour supervised internship, two Braille courses, and testing, to achieve accreditation.



May feels it is important for the people she serves to know that Delaware is providing them with a high quality of service — and that feeling is shared by the leadership at DVI. “I was the first in my unit to pursue certification, but I couldn't have done it without the support and encouragement of my supervisor Elisha Jenkins. Ms. Jenkins is a very strong advocate for employee development and she has made it her mission to help all of my co-workers obtain the training and skills necessary to become certified as well,” said May. The certification process takes time and money, and DVI is working on finding ways to support other members of the ILS team through the process while maintaining services to the people who need them.

The Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) began offering certification in 2000 to low vision therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, and vision rehabilitation therapists. Only 3600 professionals across the nation have achieved this distinction, with May being only the seventh professional in Delaware, and the first certified vision rehabilitation therapist in the state. In a relatively young field, the certification is designed “to improve service delivery to persons with vision impairment” according to ACVREP, and to “offer certificants the means to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professionalism.”

“It was definitely hard, but worth it,” said May. “It feels good to be able to let people know that we are providing best practice.”

Sandi Miller



Employee Recognition Award

The DVI Recognition Committee is pleased to announce the winner of the Employee Recognition Award for the second half of 2006: Sandi Miller, Vocational Rehabilitation Sr. Counselor. Sandi was praised for her leadership, being an extraordinary team player, and for taking on responsibilities above and beyond those required for her position. Sandi works hard to promote the independence of her clients. She also represents the agency on several external committees relating to persons with disabilities and also as the DVI representative on the State Chamber of Commerce.

New Appointments: Advisory Council for the Blind, Division for the Visually Impaired

Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner has recently named three new members to the Advisory Council on the Blind. The 7 member Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) in the Department of Health and Social Services. The Council considers matters relating to the general supervision and control of the education, training and welfare of blind persons residing in Delaware.

Named by the Governor were:



Margaret McBride, Chair

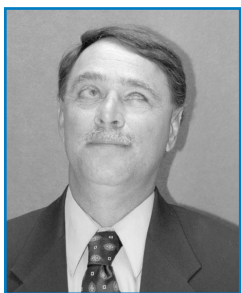
Ms. McBride of Lewes is a lifelong Delawarean and Kent County native who has lived in New Castle County as well. Married to Senator David B. McBride and mother of a son and twin daughters, she is active in the PTO and is a school volunteer. With a family history of glaucoma, which she herself has been diagnosed with, McBride is well acquainted with the issues faced by persons with visual impairments. She states her main objective will be to look out for and represent the interests for people of all ages with visual problems.



Deborah Yancey

Ms. Yancey of Bear is a native of Cape May, New Jersey. Ms. Yancey completed her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Delaware in 1985 and earned an MS from Wilmington College. Her career in Human Resources began with WSFS more than 20 years ago. Three years ago, she decided to devote more time to her husband of 19 years and three children and accepted a part-time position with AstraZeneca in the role of AA/EEO Specialist. In that position Yancey has developed a great working relationship with the Division for the Visually Impaired.

It is through this relationship that she has acquired a commitment to improving job opportunities for the blind and visually impaired. Ms. Yancey hopes to make a significant contribution to the Council by helping to exceed established and future goals.



Lloyd Schmitz

Mr. Schmitz of Lewes is a lifelong resident of Delaware. He is also sensitive to the needs of blind and visually impaired Delawareans as he has gone through all the stages of blindness as the result of cataracts as a toddler, and detached retinas as a teenager which resulted in blindness as a young adult. Mr. Schmitz is married with two adult children and one grandchild. He has served on the Council for Exceptional Citizens, and for over 25 years has been a member (and past president) of various Lions Clubs in Delaware. He has also served on the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind and is chair of the Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee. Mr. Schmitz is excited to serve on this Council and feels certain his contributions will enhance the outcomes of the Council and of the agency.

Nancy Neufang-Stopyra



DVI Employee in the Spotlight

Nancy Neufang-Stopyra, a teacher in the DVI education section, starred in the Wilmington Drama League's production of the thriller: *Wait Until Dark*. The play, which ran from October 27th until November 11th, 2006 was performed at the WDL theater on W. Lea Boulevard in Wilmington.

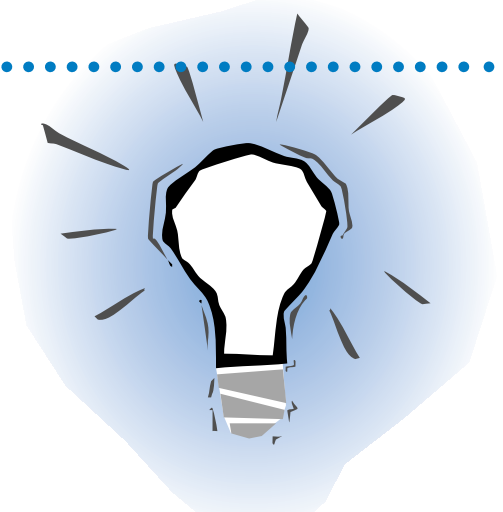
Nancy received a good deal of publicity for her portrayal of Suzy, a recently blinded woman who uses all her remaining senses to combat intruders in her home. She was featured in a recent *News Journal Crossroads* article which spoke of how she obtained insight on how to portray a blind character from her work as a teacher of blind and visually impaired students. Nancy and other cast members were

also featured in *Out and About* magazine.

DVI set up a display table in the lobby of the theater and distributed publicity material on agency programs and services at performances of the plays.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE: **News You Can Use**

The Delaware Energy Assistance Program (DEAP) is a federally funded program for families that need help in meeting their costs of home energy. The Division of State Service Centers (DSSC) administers this program on a contractual basis with Catholic Charities, Inc. To be eligible a family must have income no more than 200% of the federal poverty level.



2006-2007 Countable Income Limits - 200% FPL

Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income
1	19,600	1,634
2	26,400	2,200
3	33,200	2,767

You might be able to get help with your energy bills. It is important to call **Catholic Charities** to find out where and how to apply for assistance:

Kent County: **(302) 674-1782**

New Castle County: **(302) 654-9295**

Sussex County: **(302) 856-6310**



From Left, Vincent Meconi, Secretary, DHSS, Margaret McBride, Chair, DVI Council, Harriet Smith Windsor, Secretary of State.

Advocate for the Visually Impaired Honored: Bea Simonds Recognized at September 22 Memorial Ceremony

Friday, September 22, Delaware Health and Social Services paid tribute to DVI Advisory Council Chair Bea Simonds who died May 4, 2006. Since 1952, Simonds had dedicated her life to helping the blind and visually impaired in Delaware gain personal, social and financial independence.

"The Division for the Visually Impaired may well not exist as it does today if it were not for the leadership of Bea Simonds," said Vincent P. Meconi, Cabinet Secretary, Delaware Health and Social Services. A member of the Delaware Women's Hall of Fame, Simonds was also instrumental in developing the "Men With a Message" Brailist Program at the Delaware Correctional Center in Smyrna and the Technical Equipment Program in statewide school districts.

Simonds remained an active advocate for Delaware's blind and visually impaired until her death. "Bea's unparalleled leadership and tremendous energy have made all the difference for the blind and visually impaired in Delaware," said Cindy Lovell, Director, Division for the Visually Impaired. "Her success as an advocate has made life better for many Delawareans and her countless efforts will affect many generations to come."

Delaware Industries for the Blind: Employee Awards

DIB is proud to announce that Terrence Clark is our "Blind Employee of the Year" for 2007. Terrence has been with DIB since 2002 and has done an outstanding job during this time. He has worked in four departments of the agency and has learned twelve different jobs, including: framing saw operator, back-up receptionist, and packaging and assembly operator for our U.S. government contract. Terrence is an active member and officer in the Holloway Campus Lions Club and has loaned his talent as a DJ at last year's Lions Charter Party. Terrence is well liked by his peers and supervisors and is always willing to help coworkers and others as the need arises.

For only the second time in the last eighteen years DIB has honored a "Sighted Employee of the Year." We are very pleased to announce that Arnetta "Squeaky" Watson, Supervisor of our Textile Department has been recognized with this honor. Arnetta has been with DIB since 1992, and during this time has held a variety of positions. These include sewing machine operator, quality control inspector, engraving supervisor, and sewing department supervisor. In her present position of Textile Department Supervisor she oversees the sewing, screen printing and embroidery areas. Arnetta does an outstanding job and is a tremendous asset to Delaware Industries for the Blind. Her coworkers, fellow supervisors and managers feel she is very worthy of this recognition.



ADVOCATES CORNER

EDITOR'S NOTE: With this issue, *DVI Views* is initiating a new feature: Advocates Corner. In this space we will feature opinions from local and national advocates for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This inaugural story by Advisory Council Chair Margaret McBride is on the differing views of two national advocacy groups: **American Council of the Blind** and **National Federation of the Blind**.

ACB vs. NFB

In 2002 the American Council of the Blind (ACB) brought suit against the US Treasury Department, claiming it was in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for failing to provide accessible paper currency in a format useable by blind and visually impaired Americans. On November 29, 2006, Federal District Court Judge James Robertson agreed with the ACB and gave the Treasury Department 30 days to start discussions for potential remedies. Such remedies might consist of different sizes for different denominations, raised numerals, and perforated dots.

While the ACB hailed the decision as "...a major milestone for the blind and visually impaired of America", the **National Federation of the Blind**, (NFB) immediately criticized the ruling as "dangerously misguided".

Dr. Marc Maurer, President of the **National Federation of the Blind**, said: "The blind need jobs and real opportunities to earn money, not feel-good gimmicks that misinform the public about our capabilities. Blind people transact business with paper money every day. This ruling puts a roadblock in the way of solving the real problem, which is the seventy percent unemployment rate among working-age blind Americans".

The **National Federation of the Blind** believes that with training and opportunity, blind people can compete in the world with only minor modifications.

Two major national advocates for the blind with opposite views. What do you think? Let us know.

-Margaret McBride, Chair, Advisory Council for the Blind

Send comments to dhssinfo@state.de.us and reference "DVI advocates corner" or send a letter to us at the address on the front of the newsletter.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Hiring Visually Impaired

Since 1967, the IRS and Lions World Services for the Blind have teamed up to recruit, train and hire persons with disabilities. The IRS and LWSB provide training programs for various entry level positions at the LWSB campus in Little Rock, Arkansas. The partnership has resulted in the IRS hiring more than 2,000 people with disabilities in positions that range from customer service representatives to computer specialists. For information on the IRS training program at Lions World, visit the IRS career site at <http://www.jobs.irs.gov/home.html> and check out "People with Disabilities" or visit http://www.jobs.irs.gov/eve_search.html to find a recruiting event where you can talk to an IRS Recruiter. The IRS is currently hiring for many professional and temporary/seasonal positions nationwide.



Join Us for the 5th Annual Night of Ice Skating

Funded by: Delaware Association of Blind Athletes
Presented by: The Division for the Visually Impaired

Where: Delaware State Fair Ice Rink in Harrington
When: Saturday, March 10th, 2007
Skating 6:00-8:00pm, Social Room open 6:00-8:30pm
Who: Visually Impaired (bring your family and friends)
Cost: Free for everyone (Includes skate rental and refreshments)

Please RSVP to Sharon at **424-7257** email sharon.coutu@state.de.us or Shawn at **424-7258** or email shawn.musgrove@state.de.us

FOCUS ON A DISEASE: Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Defined

What is age-related macular degeneration?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease associated with aging that gradually destroys sharp, central vision. Central vision is needed for seeing objects clearly and for common daily tasks such as reading and driving.

AMD affects the macula, the part of the eye that allows you to see fine detail. AMD causes no pain.

In some cases, AMD advances so slowly that people notice little change in their vision. In others, the disease progresses faster and may lead to a loss of vision in both eyes. AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in Americans 60 years of age and older. AMD occurs in two forms: wet and dry.

Where is the Macula?

The macula is located in the center of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. The retina instantly converts light, or an image, into electrical impulses. The retina then sends these impulses, or nerve signals, to the brain.

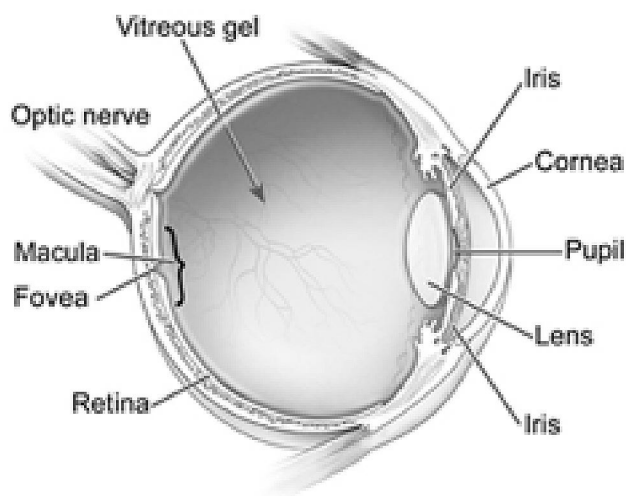
What is wet AMD?

Wet AMD occurs when abnormal blood vessels behind the retina start to grow under the macula. These new blood vessels tend to be very fragile and often leak blood and fluid. The blood and fluid raise the macula from its normal place at the back of the eye. Damage to the macula occurs rapidly.

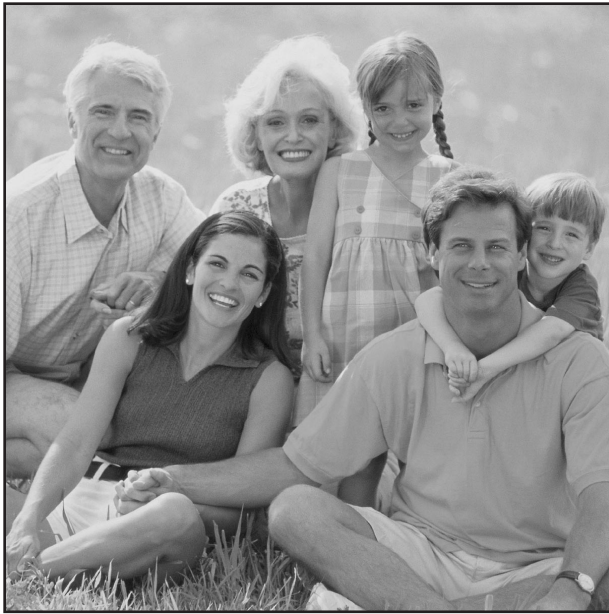
With wet AMD, loss of central vision can occur quickly.

Wet AMD is also known as advanced AMD. It does not have stages like dry AMD.

An early symptom of wet AMD is that straight lines appear wavy. If you notice this condition or other changes to your vision, contact your eye care professional at once. You need a comprehensive dilated eye exam.



<http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/maculardegen/AMDmacula.gif>



The photo on the right is what people who have macular degeneration see.

What is dry AMD?

Dry AMD occurs when the light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down, gradually blurring central vision in the affected eye. As dry AMD gets worse, you may see a blurred spot in the center of your vision. Over time, as less of the macula functions, central vision is gradually lost in the affected eye.

The most common symptom of dry AMD is slightly blurred vision. You may have difficulty recognizing faces. You may need more light for reading and other tasks. Dry AMD generally affects both eyes, but vision can be lost in one eye while the other eye seems unaffected.

One of the most common early signs of dry AMD is drusen.

What are drusen?

Drusen are yellow deposits under the retina. They often are found in people over age 60. Your eye care professional can detect drusen during a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Drusen alone do not usually cause vision loss. In fact, scientists are unclear about the connection between drusen and AMD. They do know that an increase in the size or number of drusen raises a person's risk of developing either advanced dry AMD or wet AMD. These changes can cause serious vision loss.

National Eye Institute- Resource Guide- National Institutes of Health

EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 2** 11:00 a.m. - Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.
- 15** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

MARCH

- 1** 11:30 a.m. - Independent Living Advisory Council, Fenwick Room, DELDOT, 800 Bay Road, Dover.
- 2** 11:00 a.m. - Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.
- 10** 6:00 p.m. - DABA Ice Skating Party, Harrington.
- 15** 12:00 Noon. - State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, Belmont Hall, Smyrna.
- 15** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

APRIL

- 6** 11:00 a.m. - Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.
- 19** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

MAY

- 4** 11:00 a.m. - Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.
- 17** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

JUNE

- 21** 12:00 Noon - State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, Buena Vista Conference Center, New Castle.
- 21** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

Focus on a Consumer: Sara A. Crawford

Sara Crawford is an upbeat, energetic, engaging 23 year old with a history of experiences and accomplishments most people achieve in an entire lifetime. Sara is a fashion and accessory designer whose company “Anara Original” is producing trend setting clothing for women and men in Wilmington. She has also been a client of DVI ever since she was a young girl.

Sara has fond memories of her first experiences with DVI teacher Jean Kelly years ago when she attended St. Peters Cathedral in Wilmington. She always looked forward to visits from Kelly who helped improve her learning experience, by assisting with adaptive equipment and working with her everyday teachers. Sara also remarked with a laugh that she, “enjoyed getting out of class”, when Kelly came for their regular visits.

After graduating from Padua Academy, Sara received assistance through the DVI Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Unit to fulfill one of her dreams: attending the International Academy of Design Technology in Tampa. Sara stayed in touch with the VR unit via telephone and e-mail and felt well supported during her school years. As an indication of her drive and work ethic, Sara completed the 4 year program in 3 and graduated with a B.A. in professional design and marketing in 2005.

Following graduation she gained valuable experience in New York City as an intern in the Design Development Lab Concept, and did free lance design work on the side.

Back in Wilmington for almost a year, Sara is working two part time jobs: as a receptionist and motor clothes planner for “Mike’s Famous Harleys” in New Castle and as a teacher of sewing and fashion design for “Joann Fabrics” of Claymont and Newark. She continues designing and marketing clothing and accessories and is actively looking for retail space.

Sara is quick with praise for her current VR worker Sandi Miller. “Sandi is the greatest”, she said. She is very responsive and “flexible in scheduling”, offering to come to her home to make the agency services more accessible. Sara appreciates the support of DVI, and although she is visually impaired, she doesn’t think of herself as disabled, and definitely hasn’t let it affect her outlook on life or her goal of opening a boutique in Wilmington by age 25, and then expanding nationally. Sara has the energy, drive and support to make it happen.



Extra, Extra, Extra Have You Heard?

DVI's Revised Resource Guide is now available. This publication is a compilation of a variety of services and resources.

The Guide to Services & Resources for Delawareans with Visual Impairments is available in alternative formats (large print, CD, Audio, Braille, and Spanish).

Call DVI for your copy today!

New Castle County: **(302) 255-9800**

Kent & Sussex Counties: **(302) 424-7240**

Independent Living Advisory Committee News

The Independent Living Advisory Committee is seeking members. The purpose of the Independent Living Advisory Committee is to provide guidance in the development and expansion of the Independent Living Services program on a statewide basis to DVI and the Statewide Independent Living Council. The Committee meets 4-6 times a year. Please contact Elisha Jenkins at **(302) 255-9813** for additional information

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DVI VIEWS

Division for the Visually Impaired, Delaware Health and Social Services

Cynthia Lovell, Director • Bob Goodhart, Deputy Director • Debra Simpson, Elisha Jenkins, Jack Holloway, Editorial Staff

<http://www.state.de.us/dhss/dvi/index.html>

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Biggs Building
1901 N. Dupont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720-1199

